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Horsman

THE LOVER'S REPLIES

TO AN

ENGLISHWOMAN'S LOVE LETTERS

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SECOND EDITION

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AN EXPLANATION

It is difficult to understand what circumstance "all commanding," short of actual starvation, could have "urged" the sale and publication of "An Englishwoman's Love Letters"; and quite impossible to comprehend the interest aroused in the public mind by documents, the essential part of which may be summed up in the verb "to love." Other matter than a record of the varying

phases of the passion of a love-sick girl may be found in those letters omitted and confined to the "short notes, not above twenty in all," left out without indication of their omission.

Concerning "a due regard to the claims of privacy," and the promise on the part of the editor, or editress, of the documents that "those who know will keep silence," &c., he or she could have had no guarantee. The families and friends of both parties are numerous, and the letters will have been identified and discussed by both sides, with feelings which may be better imagined than described; feelings which prompt those who know the true story to publish the answers to the letters in vindication of the honour of a man who is no longer here to speak for himself. From those answers to both the published and to suppressed "short notes, not above twenty in all," the reader will be able to form an opinion of the case, and attach the responsibility of the broken

engagement to the real circumstances which "came whole out of the hands of fate."

It is difficult to follow a correspondence without dates, which, though not the genuine ones, are prefixed to the following letters.

ANSWER TO LETTER I

GRAYTON HALL,
May.

DEAREST,—You would not have been the first to write but for an accident to my friend B. P., who has had a nasty fall that will lay him up, I fear, for the rest of the season. I was riding home after I left you, sweet one, when I came in view of B. Hill, just at the foot of which I saw a group of men and horses. I knew there had been a spill, and I rode across to inquire. There I found poor B. speechless and bleeding from a deep cut in the forehead. We got him up and I took him to Uncle Mac's, where he is still. Aunt M., an excellent nurse, had the wound dressed before the doctor arrived, but all this time, though B.

breathed and groaned, he never opened his eyes or regained consciousness till we got him to bed. Then the doctor gave him something which seemed to call him back to life and pain. Poor fellow, he winced when the bad place was touched. It is the collar bone. Smashed and the shoulder knocked out of its place. I feel fairly sick at the thought of what he must suffer. I did not leave him till nearly seven o'clock, and arrived home late for dinner; but the dear old people had waited, and had nothing but kind words for me and deep sympathy for poor B., though we sat down to a spoilt dinner, which was ordered for half-past seven and eaten at nine o'clock.

After dinner there were some people who had come to a meeting; you know my dear old Mammy is a kind of saint to the very low churchites, and it gives her great joy if I sometimes stay at home for one of these meetings. This is why you have had the chance to write first, and such a

letter. How can I thank you for all the sweet kind things you so cleverly say? I can never write like that, dear girl; I hope you do not expect it. You know I am not clever, but for that and all other shortcomings I will try to make up by earnest devotion. You deserve all the praise, sweetheart, that you can give yourself, or that I can find words for. Fancy your writing all these letters, and if I had gone to Norway with L. R., I should still be ignorant of the grand secret. How could I imagine that you cared for me? You with your talent and your beauty. I am so stupid. I ought to be vain. I cannot get over the wonder of it, that two of the cleverest women in the world should love me. My dear, my loving mother and my sweetest of sweet girls. I shall see you soon. I hope the day after to-morrow; until which happy time, I am, as I ever hope to be,

Your devoted,

ANSWER TO LETTER II

London,

May.

Dearest,—I was starting for town when your letter was put in my hand. I had no time to write this morning, and have only a few minutes to-night. My uncle has a dinner, a kind of official send-off to his brother, another but much younger uncle, and I have been helping in the only way I can ever be of use at home. Sometimes I think it a misfortune to be the son of a man so justly distinguished as was my dear father. He has left nothing for me to win. I cannot but wonder at times what I should have made of my life had I begun as did my father, obscure and poor. Alas! I fear

I should be still at the foot of the ladder, to the very top of which he had climbed. *Adieu*, sweetheart. I am sending you some books, of some of which I believe you once spoke lovingly. You will tell me if I am right, but I have a bad-shaped memory at times. To-morrow I shall see you. To-morrow I shall bring your ring. I found it this morning in Bond Street: almost an exact copy of my mother's engagement ring. If it brings you the happiness which began for her with that gift, and lasted till interrupted by her terrible loss and great sorrow, you will have little to wish for in this world; but, alas! that depends not upon you, sweet one, but upon my unworthy self. Do you know your letters frighten me a little? How am I to live up to your ideal? Sweet one, your brilliant imagination has endowed me with qualities I do not possess. If I try to act up to your opinion, I shall be acting, and I shall live in dread of being found

out. Do please, dearest of women, do try to love me as I am, a poor thing, but genuine. There is no use veneering a rough surface, it won't stick. Good night, my dear love.

Ever your devoted,

ANSWER TO LETTER III

LONDON,
May.

So very sorry, my dear girl, that I am still here, and not at your side. I am detained by my two uncles, who have some rather unpleasant business to settle for me. You will understand how impossible it is for me to shirk any part of the unpleasantness and to leave these two busy men to do my work, or rather to undo my mischief. I shall get away to-morrow, I hope. I am so glad you liked the books: a very tame way of answering your enthusiastic mention of the little gift. In fact, my letters seem tame to dullness compared with yours, and but that I could not improve

it by re-writing, I should tear this up. I also have a mouse story, which I have never told before for reasons you will quite understand. On the yacht I always burn a night-light; I am a light sleeper, and hate waking up in the dark. A little fellow used to appear night after night on the table beside my berth, and pick up the biscuit crumbs, at first left there accidentally, then purposely for him. The first and second nights I lay motionless; I thought him unconscious of my presence; but afterwards we became very good friends, and discussed matters freely. He always stood up with his little white shirt-front towards me, his bead-like eyes fixed upon my face whilst he nibbled his biscuit, held between the daintiest of little paws. I became very fond of my small visitor, and varied his repast constantly by bringing from table sometimes a bit of apple, sometimes a nut. At first he carried nothing away, but went to bed after dining

in the most orderly manner. Then he began to provide either for an increasing family, or for his old age, for he established a line of communication between the supplies and his home, and foraged and worked so long as there was a crumb to carry away. Now comes the tragedy. One night I turned in late. We were in the Mediterranean off Monte Carlo. I was sleepy and dead tired, but I waited and watched for my little friend, who came not. I was dropping off into the valley of dreams, when I heard a slight noise at my bedside. I jumped up. There was my poor wee one caught in a cruel trap. The little fellow stood up against the bars. There was a drop of blood on his white shirt-front, his little eyes seemed partially closed. I confess mine were dim. I opened the horrible cage; he knew quite well he was safe with me; he slowly crawled out. I watched him making his way to the little tunnel he had excavated under the moulding. I

threw the horrible trap into the sea from my cabin window, and went to sleep. But I never more saw my pretty visitor. Nor did I ever before confess to what the sailors would be sure to call my feminine weakness; I think it was the betrayal of the confidence my visitor had placed in me, and the inhospitality of the thing that so upset me, but I felt a great desire to explain things to that little confiding and betrayed creature. *Adieu*, my dearest . . . to-morrow I shall be with you.

Yours devotedly,

ANSWER TO LETTER IV

May.

DEAREST,—Thursday was a red-letter day. But how short the time I spent at Blankley! Your clocks are all fast. I might have had quite ten minutes more at the house, precious minutes wasted at the station. When am I to see the great work of art, the dress? The envelope of my precious "love letter writ large." Is it to be Wednesday or Saturday next week? Not Sunday, dear; I owe the Sunday to my dear mother; besides, you always have people at Blankley on Sunday, and so will not miss me. But whenever I look Blankley way, I see the star up over the temple of my divinity, and my eyes are turned

that way whenever I go out. I have already begun castle building. The plans are still vague and variable, and the site difficult to choose. Sometimes it is a hill, upon which I build a great castle with battlements and towers, a glittering crown to the darkly wooded eminence upon which it is set. I have at times completed the interior, but even by your side, dearest, and you are now always there, a dreariness and loneliness comes over me, and when I go up aloft, and look around, I see wretched habitations from which human beings emerge looking weary of the colourless life of poverty. I see little children hollow-cheeked and hollow-eyed. My castle crumbles, and I build a cottage and dwell with my poor neighbours, and you and I help them to a little light and a few flowers on the road which we all are travelling. I have always, since childhood, been in the mental building business. My mother was ever the chatelaine of the

various structures till I met you. Now poor mother is turned out of castle and cottage. True, she has a most beautiful dower house, and we give her our Sundays. It is her treat, and we gainsay nothing she arranges. We go to church and listen to her low church curate's platitudes with the same patience that my father had shown for years. Once my dear father, having observed my impatience (during one of the Reverend Blank's graphic elucidations of the unexplainable), gave me a kind of receipt for the infliction, and how to bear it. "Treat the weekly attendance," he said, "as a social discipline; accept it as a young soldier accepts and performs his duty. He may have and probably has a difference of opinion on the subject of the usefulness of what seems to him wearying and useless routine, but he obeys implicitly the rules and regulations, and questions not the mental capacity of his superior officer."

This is how my dear old dad smoothed out all the wrinkles in life. My mother's one weakness is, in accepting as a holy thing all that bears a sacred name, no matter by whom the name has been given. My father, whose course through life was founded upon reason and guided by profound judgment, never looked down upon this weakness, or held it up to ridicule. But finding that what she understands as religion was all sufficient for her happiness, he supported her in the practice of it, and by such grand support secured from others respect for her religious opinions.

Good-night, dearest, and all good wishes from

Yours devotedly,

ANSWER TO ONE OF THE TWENTY NOT PUBLISHED

May.

DEAREST,—I know by this tiny note of yours that your stationery box is empty. So I give you warning that you will have no such excuse for sending me a doll's letter after next Wednesday, when will be finished the first instalment of some half ton of writing paper, all marked and initialled, a consignment of pens and sealing wax, and some thousands of envelopes. I took your present initials as a pattern to Warbrook and Company, and from them you will receive the "goods." This line to prevent you ordering; and the very first use you are expected to make of the stationery is

to write me a date for which I have already twice asked, a date upon which we are to begin our wanderings together. A delightful idea of yours to have no route fixed beforehand, but just to drift.

Ever and ever your devoted,

ANSWER TO LETTERS V AND VI

London,
June.

Dearest,—I am delighted that you are pleased with the miniature, even to the setting. I did not like the picture so well as the photograph. I think it a great risk to use colour in painting a man's portrait. We look for it in a woman's. However, if you are satisfied, I am grateful.

I object to my darling calling herself names, and nonenity can never be spoken even in jest in connection with the cleverest woman in England, and I repeat the word, and shall claim you as my divinity. We need not choose separate stars, dear one. It will be your fault if we do not very soon

look at the same stars from the same place. Your fault if after a certain date not yet named, but for which I am *not* patiently waiting, we are ever apart again.

Many, many joyous returns of the birthday, dearest, and may I be there to see.

Ever and ever your devoted,

ANSWER TO LETTER VII

London,
June.

My Dearest,—How good you are to me, but it grieves me when you write sadly, and your last has a melancholy cadence which at times I have detected in your voice. Why should love mean fear? To me it means great happiness, and you are happy, I hope. Your dear letters breathe happiness at every line, and your beautiful face is fairly radiant with love and joy.

I think you have inherited prescience from that gipsy ancestress of yours. I do not mind telling you now, for you have opened the door for me, that I know my engagement will grieve my mother. She looks upon me still as a lad. But there is

nothing to fear beyond this, there is nothing with which to exercise your patience; and you alone can prevent all evidence of impatience in me, by sending me by return the date upon which I can make you entirely mine, as I am, and ever shall be, yours

Devotedly,

P.S.—I hope to see you the day after to-morrow.

ANSWER TO LETTER VIII

LONDON,
June.

DEAREST,—I received your beautiful letter and I inclosed it in one to my mother. I have a confession to make, beloved; forgive me, but I had not before announced my engagement to my people. I thought to put it off till I could say that we had fixed a certain date for our marriage. My mother will not return to London this season; no doubt I shall hear from her to-night, as she is still in Surrey, and will, I am sure, call at once at Blankley. I am entirely with you, dearest, in your pity for the innocent victims of man's greed. Not only those sacrificed to satisfy an abnormal appetite for flesh food, but the beautiful

creatures tortured and killed to gratify human vanity. The murder of innocent birds whose life is a joy to themselves and to us all; the theft of their beautiful plumage for human decoration, in many instances torn from the mother, who falls into the hands of the marauder whilst bravely defending her young. These sins, dearest, are committed by no sportsman, for whom there is this one excuse: that, lingering through all these centuries of so-called civilisation, there remains in man the instinct of the food provider, which in the early days of our history fell upon the hunter. The instinct has been fostered by men of leisure in country places, but it is disappearing rapidly now before the encroachments of the city, and is weakened where it once most prevailed by the newly-awakened sympathy with animal suffering. My dear mother, a pioneer in the late movement for the protection of animals, like yourself, deplores my sporting proclivities;

under such influence I am bound to reform, and if I follow my father's wishes and begin a political career, I shall have no time for sport of any other kind.

You are wrong, dearest, in your diagnosis of my ailment. My love troubles me not. If I gave any sign of trouble when we met it was at the entirely exaggerated view you take of my worth. Whatever power of loving I possess is yours, and that is my claim and my only one to your affection. But you, in your great generosity, have given me a kind of worship which does in a way frighten me, and this it was which you saw in my face, dearest, and no other trouble. My uncle is so occupied that I scarcely see him. He comes home at seven o'clock with the brougham filled with papers, and immediately after dinner he is shut up with one or two secretaries till bed time. I have had no opportunity of speaking to him on this the great event of my life, and

I have asked my mother to break the ice for me. I know that whether they approve or disapprove I shall have their loving sympathy; and as for you, dearest, they have but to know you, and of your lonely life, to love and respect you. I am engaged to old friends to-night at Brighton; I go down by an afternoon train, but hope to return earlyish to-morrow.

Should I find a letter from my mother I will wire you when to expect me.

Ever devotedly yours,

ANSWER TO NOTE NOT PUBLISHED

BRIGHTON,
July.

DEAREST,—Your note followed me by next train. The butler sent it on under cover, for it was not sealed, or the wretched mucilage had given way. Seeing the letter marked "Urgent," Brinson inclosed and sent it on. Please, dearest, seal your letters, and when I return to London I will have a little seal made for you, and then you must use up all that sealing wax. I was to have returned to town yesterday, but my friends had arranged everything for a longer visit, and the weather is superb. We were all day yesterday on the sea, which was like a flexible mirror.

One wonders where the great upheaval which causes the swell comes from. It is as if the world were breathing underneath. It is a mistaken idea that Brighton is hot in summer. There is always a cool breeze from the sea or the downs, and I think it delightful, and no where in England has so much been done for the comfort of residents and visitors. But everything in the way of pleasure depends upon one's enjoyment of the sea. There is nothing else to amuse or interest. Roads, gardens and promenades are kept in perfection. Beautifully lighted by electricity, excellently laid and always clean, the roads or streets of the place are a pleasure to travellers, but, alas! they lead to no place of interest. There is no assembly room, no casino, no place where man may meet his fellow-man and where he may be sure to meet friends and listen to good music.

Almost directly opposite, over across the pond, is Dieppe, a horribly smelly place

with an orange peel and waste paper strewn *plage*, the only promenade on the sea-front, which has for background an old undrained town fairly reeking all summer with villainous odours. But Dieppe has a first-rate casino, where an excellent band plays all day, and where good concerts are given from time to time; and Dieppe has good restaurants, where a properly cooked dinner may be enjoyed at a fair price. Dieppe has crowds of visitors all summer long, chiefly French and other continental people, who do not feel compromised by speaking civilly to a stranger. And dirty little Dieppe is popular, and clean, beautiful Brighton is only visited by those who cannot go across to Dieppe.

We English people take life so seriously that our latest interest entirely absorbs us. If our occupation be money getting, we talk money, we live money. In politics it is the same. If in love we forget *to inquire for a poor fellow who is laid up with a*

smashed collar-bone!! Do you know, my sweet girl, that you have never asked after poor B. P., lying so near you too, and very bad, I fear?

Ever, dearest, your devoted,

ANSWER TO UNPUBLISHED NOTE AND ALSO TO LETTER IX

London,
July.

My Dear,—I found your little note in my pocket, but only by accident. I arrived home late and threw my dust coat to Brinson, and the little thing dropped out. And you are "not interested in Brighton and Dieppe." You "hate the former for keeping me," and the latter "for occupying so much of my letter," and you are disgusted—I see you are—that I should be interested in a "properly cooked dinner." But have I not the authority of one of the most sentimental of lovers and poets who says,

> "You may live without love;
> What is passion but pining?

But where is the man who
Can live without dining?"

Why didn't you scold me yesterday instead of writing? You dear, sweet, sentimental little fraud. There were you seemingly as happy as a bird, and during the whole time of my visit pouring out your sweet sentiments of love and delight, and all that time you had this little dagger concealed, with which to pierce my matter-of-fact heart. But I have something to say for myself before sentence shall be passed. Besides the authority I have quoted, does not your own ownest "Omar Khayyam" include in his picture of supreme happiness the "mutton-bone"? Now I contend that "a properly cooked dinner," is more poetic in fancy and in fact than a "mutton-bone," and when we begin to "drift," I pray some friendly current may bear us to a French shore, that I may show you how love may be included in the happiness of a choice

dinner. "I know a bank" where the very poetry of food lies hidden, and I know the Open, Sesame, with which the treasures are disclosed, but hear me swear, I shall never share you with a "mutton-bone."

Ever your devoted,

ANSWER TO LETTER X

London,
July.

Dearest,—I have your last night's epistle, and I am going to anticipate my authority by a positive command. I will not forgive disobedience, and we will have our first quarrel, if you again talk such insane language as closed your letter. What would be your opinion of a man who allowed the girl who loved him to talk of being at his feet? If you knew such a case you would despise the man, and if you knew the woman, and she were like yourself, possessed of a brilliantly poetic nature, you would smile in derision of the lout who had accepted from her such homage.

I shrink from throwing an explosive into the world you have created for yourself. I

tremble at scattering the things of beauty where you dwell, and, sweetheart, I hesitate to knock down the idol which you have so beautifully gilded, set up, and called it by my name. But in your world I really have no place. We cannot live there together. Should I attempt it I should live in constant dread of the fall, which would knock off the gilding, and leave only fragments of common clay.

Therefore, dear one, think well and seriously before you plant the beautiful flower of your life in a cabbage garden. Cabbages have their place in the world, but they can never hope to become roses, and they might object to the pity which the rose would excite, and probably herself feel, at the incongruity of her surroundings. Now, dearest love, no more of that. If there is to be any falling down in worship I must do it. When am I to be at your feet?

Yours ever devotedly,

ANSWER TO UNPUBLISHED LETTER

London,
July.

Your letter is more painful to read than mine was to write. I shall go to you to-morrow, and we will try to understand each other. Yes, I perfectly understand that neither you nor I can change our nature, so, dearest, we must see how we can reconcile the differences. My very kind remembrance to M. A. and to Nan Nan, and many thanks to Peterkins.

Yours devotedly,

ANSWER TO UNPUBLISHED LETTER

BRAMORRIS, N.B.
August 20th.

DEAREST,—Your letter of no date, but probably written same day as posted, 28th July, and that of August 6th came at the same moment, and I have delayed writing till now for the very best of reasons. We are up here in a hastily improvised shooting wigwam, and there is not a sheet of paper or a pen or a drop of ink sold within sixty miles of us, that being the distance to train, or post, or shop.

One of the gillies borrowed an *ink horn* and a pen from a shepherd, and we are tearing out and writing on these little sheets of our note-books. My space is so

nearly exhausted that I can only say that I shall be back in England about the end of September. I still regret your keeping and treasuring these silly letters, and do forgive me, but I should like them destroyed. Please make a small bonfire, read an *auto-da-fé*, and burn them at the stake. No more paper, and five savages clamouring for the ink.

Ever your devoted,

ANSWER TO UNPUBLISHED LETTER

CAIRNFORTH,
September 8th.

BACK to civilisation and a good bed. I slept to-day till the post had gone. This will go to-morrow. I expect to go south about the 22nd. I shall go home at once, as I must see my people before "the announcement" reaches them through the *Morning Post*. I quite agree with M. A. She is right, the engagement should have been made known to friends before, but what the public have to do with it, and why it should be announced in the newspapers, that I do fail to understand. If you agree with me, dearest, we will have no *Morning Post* announcement. It will

give our acquaintances a much desired excuse for not sending wedding presents, which have become a tax on the purse of many that can ill bear further demands. Our friends and relations will know all about the dates, &c., directly everything is settled, and their *souvenirs* will be cherished, but I should much rather not accept gifts from mere acquaintances. I hope to be with you on or about the 1st, and then we will arrange everything.

Ever, dearest,

Yours devotedly,

LETTER AFTER A VISIT TO BLANKLEY

London,
September.

Dearest,—I had quite forgotten how beautiful you could be when you cared to take the trouble. I thought you radiant yesterday, and I am really grateful to you, dear, for adopting modern dress and for rolling up your beautiful hair. No doubt, dearest, your former dress and the wild magnificence of your beautiful mane was more artistic than the present fashion, but anything so unusual in our everyday life makes a woman conspicuous, and that of all things should be avoided. My dear mother will be in London for a few days

next week, she will stop over expressly to make your acquaintance, and will drive over from Aunt Mac's. You will think her formidable, dear. *I* believe her to be a little shy. She and they all have been most kind, and nothing has been thought of since they knew but the engagement, the marriage, and the "after glow," as my mother calls the honeymoon. Bless you, dearest, and good night.

Your devoted,

P.S.—I have opened this to say that my mother has wired that we are to expect her to-morrow. She had seen the announcement in the *M. P.*

Yours, dearest, as ever,

ANSWER TO LETTER XIV

September.

DEAREST,—I could not have believed that three of your beautiful letters could have been left all this time unanswered except by the unsatisfactory messages I have been obliged to send in place of letters. My dear, I have not been reposing on a bed of roses since the unfortunate appearance of those few words in the *Morning Post.* I do much wish that M. A. had waited till the arrival and introduction of my dear mother. I am sure *you* will understand the feelings of a most affectionate mother at seeing this advertisement of the engagement of her son before she had had the opportunity of announcing

the matter to her sisters and brothers, my aunts and uncles, who have always been my most indulgent and affectionate friends. However, dear, it cannot be helped now. I think everything will be arranged for our settlement about a fortnight hence. After that we can fix any date which suits you. London is intolerable. There is a scarcity of water, and the dust and *debris* set in circulation by the movement of some four millions of restless human beings pervades everything and every place. Our house is so close we can scarcely breathe in it, and nothing comes in at the windows when we open them but dust and bad odours. I think we shall all get away this week. I shall go to Uncle Mac's, to see you daily. I wonder if that pony of yours is good for a trot to Canterbury? I should so like to take you there. I believe we can do the whole distance on the Pilgrims' Road. My mother will only remain a day or two at Uncle Mac's. She will call on you directly;

and she feels the necessity of getting my uncle away from London; he looks alarmingly worse and tired.

Good night, beloved,

Ever your devoted,

ANSWER TO LETTER XV

GRAYTON HALL, SURREY.
September.

DEAREST,—I am relieved that the visit is over, but grieved that my dear old mother should have so unfavourably impressed you. Let me assure you, dearest, that you are much mistaken about the crushing business. Nothing is farther from her character. And you are right about the kindness of her heart. How clever and what keen instincts you have. You are quite right concerning the reason for close inspection. Some idiotic rumour has reached her that there was insanity in your family, and old-fashioned people like my mother and uncle do not easily discard their prejudices. But

never fear, dearest, all will come right. When are we to have that Canterbury ride? I am to stay here as long as I like, and I shall like it up to the day when we embark together and begin to drift. It is most kind of Uncle Mac, and of Aunt Mac, to make things so easy and so pleasant for me. I read to my mother that part of your dear letter in which you speak of your parents. When I had finished I saw that she was crying. "Poor dear, poor dear," she said; "one scarcely knows which story it is best to believe. That which tells of a mother's separation from her children because of a mental breakdown, or that of a mother and father unwilling to practise patience and submission for the sake of the children for whose presence in this world they alone are responsible, and who should be their first consideration. Give your dear one my love," she said; "guard her against eccentricity in looks and manner, for with parents having such a

record people will be on the look-out for symptoms of what is said to be the family malady."

Adieu till to-morrow, dearest of dear girls.

Your devoted,

ANSWER TO LETTER SIXTEEN

September 29th.

I SHALL, I hope, see you before sunset, but I may not be able to ride over till to-morrow. My mother is waiting for a telegram from my uncle with marching orders. He has promised to leave London to-night if possible, she is to meet him at the station, and they go to Bournemouth for a month's greatly needed rest. I shall escort her to London when the call comes.

I was reading over your precious letters last night, dearest. I carry them with me wherever I go. Nothing more beautiful was ever writ, nothing more flattering ever reached a lover, and alas and alas that there should be a "but." There is, and it starts

up and out of the sweetest, dearest passages. *But* your letters are all upon one subject, all directed to one object: the subject, love; the object, a young man with whom I am not on the best of terms—in fact with whom I am not a little disgusted. For I cannot but think that he has practised hypocrisy, shown his best side, and concealed from you his true character, and has thereby won worship, where he deserves, and should be grateful for toleration. Now, dearest, do forgive me for saying one word that may sound unlover-like; ungrateful I am not for your sweet and absorbing devotion, but (here again that horrid interloper, that Paul Pry, that cross examiner "*But*") I am afraid of the awakening. Do you think your poor mother was less in love in her time? Was her whole nature not absorbed by the ideal her brilliant imagination had created? And when the every-day necessities of life, the maternal and social obligations of a

mother and the head of a family intervened, when her ideal was obliged from the circumstances of his position to manage and to discuss sublunary matters, then did not her divinity fall from grace, and was not her awakening too much to bear in the presence of her shattered idol? She went away, turned her back upon the realities of life, and dreamed out existence. Her one absorbing interest in life was a dream. She peopled other worlds with etherealised beings whose existence was independent of human support, or human effort, and with these she lived out her life. She became so indifferent to comfort that her external surroundings were destitute of all evidence of her refined nature. She felt no interest in any human being, and thus she lived and died. My aunt knew her well, and says that nothing could have been sweeter than her disposition, and that her conversation was poetry itself.

Dearest, dearest, do you wonder at my

anxiety, knowing this history, that I am frightened, when reading over your dear letters, to find no word of interest in life that is not embodied in love for a man who possesses none of the attributes calculated to inspire worship ?

In all your letters, dearest, there is no word of inquiry concerning my friends, or my interests. No word describing your presents, or showing interest in your surroundings. All this frightens me, and causes those who have our interests at heart great anxiety. Now, dearly beloved, will you promise me to look upon life, and to regard me, rationally ? and will you try to find some congenial occupation—some pursuit—with which let me divide your interest ?—your heart's affection is, I know, entirely mine.

Ever, sweet,
Your devoted,

P.S.—You say nothing about the ride to Canterbury ?

ANSWER TO UNPUBLISHED LETTER

September.

DEAREST,—Your little note crossed my letter of yesterday. Your picture, dear, of a drive instead of a ride to Canterbury, "with your hand in mine all the way," is delightful in the picture, but as is usual with sunny scenes on the real or imaginary canvas, the ugly difficulties are not shown. The picture leaves out the long dusty road, the scenery obscured by high hedges, the tired horses. No, dear, the drive is not to be thought of, and perhaps it is a little late for the ride which would have been most enjoyable early in the month. The ride is possible without ever touching the main

road. Soft turf and the loveliest country all the way.

I am off in an hour's time with my mother to London, from which I will write if I do not return to-morrow.

Yours ever devotedly,

ANSWER TO LETTER XVII

October.

My Dearest,—With your vivid imagination, your wonderful readiness of language, amounting to eloquence, a breeziness of style as fresh and as refreshing as the air from the mountains in spring, and withal so strong an individuality that you can defy imitation, with these qualities, dearest, and also with what one can only define as masculine power, your success in a literary career is assured, and I feel poor indeed, for having so little to offer you in return for the abandonment of a pursuit so fascinating, with fame at the end of it—indeed, with fame from the beginning. I read your letters with pride and admiration, and,

dearest, I do find it difficult to believe that they are written to me and for me. What can I do to assure you of my appreciation of all that you are giving me? What have I to offer you of which you are not abundantly possessed? A lover of long ago had great advantage over the modern production. He, the lover of the past, could hie away to the wars and win honours to lay at the feet of the lady of his love, or he could tilt a passage at arms in a tournament, and by overcoming his adversary win her praise and admiration; or he could go on a crusade with her colours on his arm, and bring her back no end of loot of which he had spoiled the heathen. Then he could sing love songs under her window, and all lovers then had voices and played the lute.

In these degenerate days the lover is permitted to send the lady of his love a few books, an engagement ring, by which last sign and token, "know all men his

claim and right to the hand that bears his mark." Does not this remind you of "Gurth, the son of Beowulf"? Dearest, good-night.

Your ever devoted,

ANSWER TO LETTER XVIII

SURREY,

October.

DEAREST,—I have strained some of the machinery of my foot and the pain is excruciating, that is why you had no letter yesterday. The pain has reduced me to a state of second childhood, and only a few hours ago I was lamenting the days of jousts and tournaments—sighing that there were no longer heathen to fight. How placidly one reads of battle-axes crashing through helmets of iron and steel. How we rise to the man who "hurls his adversary from the saddle." I would kill the heathen if I could, who had caused me this pain which prevents me at this moment saying more than my love to you, dear, sweet angel.

Ever devotedly,

ANSWER TO LETTER XIX

October.

DEAREST,—I must have patience, and so must you. There is nothing else for it. Oh ! I am more sorry than I can say about the letter. After I had written it, and before it was addressed, the doctor came, and after that I really thought of nothing but the agonizing pain of my foot. Then the next morning my mother sent off for other advice. I think it came none too soon. The new doctor looked grave, and at once wired for a surgeon, and then the two great men had their will of my poor foot, and all this time your letter lay in the folds of my writing-pad.

I am sorry about the "poor old chappie's coat with the fat pocket." I doubt his finding it after his long walk back. I sent

a line over to the rectory to inquire if the Vicar knew of the loss; he will have heard if the coat belongs to any one in his parish. Don't worry about it, darling, we will make up the loss to the tired wayfarer, and give him a rest after his long walk back. The foot is better, I believe, though done up in swaddling clothes and buried in plaster; there is no communication whatever between us, and only when I move am I conscious of the poor wounded member's existence. My mother and Aunt Mac are simply devoted. You must not think me neglected, and though indeed it would be sweet to have you here, dearest, I am sure it would bore you terribly. I will try to describe the routine of each day to you, and I fear I am in for weeks of it, and one day will be like unto another to the end. A nurse has arrived from London, a nice quiet woman with a great mass of hair, turned slightly grey, rolled back from a wide low forehead that projects over deep-

set large dark eyes, the most melancholy I have ever seen. The under part of her face is all projections, teeth evicted, nose and chin upturned. She has a soft voice and gentle ways, is dressed in unrustling cotton of a nice colour, and is called "Sister." Owing to my dear father's training in what he called the science of observation, I am always interested in my surroundings, and I have come to think no science more conducive to happiness. A walk with my dear father, and a most bleak and arid road, would be turned by a few words into a scene of intense interest. My earliest recollections of one of these magical effects was a tramp with a climb in it in the North country. It was quite early, and the hill paths were damp and slippery. Wet earth protruded between the short-cropped tufts of grass, upon which my dear father walked, giving me the narrow path and the help of his strong hand. Just at the top of the hill, which

was to me a mountain, two great rocks had pierced their way through, and between these the little pathway led. Suddenly, from the dark, damp, and chilling hill-side, we were in a scene of warmth and beauty.

"Look, my boy," said my father; "the country is alike on both sides of the hill. The grass grows in tufts here as there, and the pathway is as damp. What is it, *I wonder*, that makes the difference?" I did not know, and I thought my father really depended upon me for information. Proud of being consulted, I looked around for the answer. The short grass was sparkling as if diamonds had been thrown over it. The insect nets were spread and clinging to every projection, shining out as if they were made of finest silver wire. Far down in the valley the river lay, a white scroll unfolded in the dark soil. What was it which had wrought this beautiful picture out of such poor materials? I looked up at the sky, and blinked with the intensity

of light. Then the answer came to me, "Why, daddy, it is the sun that makes the difference. We were on the shady side before."

"Yes," the dear man said, "you are right. It is the light from above that makes the journey tolerable. Always remember, my boy, that though the light may be hidden for a time, the source of light and of life has never moved, but is just shut out from us for the moment." Then I was told of the wonderful weaving of the silver web, and shown how the little elastic thread was first fastened with nice precision to a high projection. How it was brought down and woven along the ground, carried up to a certain point, then made taut and lifted like a gossamer bridge till it swings in the air, and all to catch the unwary prey, all planned with one object. This a little disgusts the child who has been taught from earliest infancy that he must love his neighbour as himself

and do unto others as he would they should do unto him. And here was all living creation setting traps to catch and destroy each other.

Good-bye, dearest, there are better times coming for you and me, and long years are before us. We must try to bear the waiting with patience. I have not read a word of the book yet, but I shall probably come to that stage to-morrow.

Ever and ever your devoted,

ANSWER TO LETTER XX

October.

DEAREST,—Your letters are the joy of my long days of imprisonment. I read your last to Aunt Amy, between whom and myself there is great sympathy on the subject of what you call "private devotions." After we had laughed over the "Golden Letter" story, my aunt reminded me of an incident which had quite escaped my memory. I was ten when it happened: rather a precocious little rascal I must have been. Nurse had complained that I had refused to say my prayers, and when I was had up for the offence, I defended myself by saying that nurse wanted me to pray for a new and obedient heart, and that I wouldn't do it because Mr. Blankensop (the

curate) had preached that very day that "God knew what was best for us." Mr. Blankensop was sent for, and I felt no end important at being considered too clever for my mother and nurse. The curate came, but the interview was unsatisfactory, and proceedings were stayed till the arrival of my dear father. The affair ended by my being sent to school, where I was flogged for bumptiousness and disobedience, and no questions asked.

My foot is much better; the nurse is a jewel and worth a dozen doctors. She is a character. It amuses me to see the polite deference with which she listens to my mother's and to Aunt Amy's suggestions concerning her patient; then she obeys the doctor's instructions to the letter, ignoring all else. Yesterday Aunt Amy found a small book in the summer house; it was called on the outside "The Book of Prayer." Upon opening it was found to contain the Lord's Prayer only. All the other pages

(there were fifty) were blank. Nurse claimed the book, and put it without comment into a little basket she carries, and in which I observed other books. "You carry your library with you," I remarked. "Yes," she answered, "I take a few books with me on my travels. I am not a good sleeper, and these dear friends make minutes of the wakeful hours." I asked for an introduction to the interesting friends; they were all French; and later she read for me in the most perfect accents some exquisite things of de Musset's.

It is very peaceful here. Every one is kind. The foot is most grateful for your kind inquiries, and is being so spoilt by all this attention that it will be ready to repeat the experiment at your bidding. I have read little since my imprisonment. Everything is so new to me in the small world I have come to inhabit, that I lie for hours studying it and the habits and customs of its people. The one cloud which

darkens my circumscribed sky is that which shuts out Blankley. Dearest, I cannot by letter explain my dear mother's position in this matter, but some day, with your dear hand in mine, some day I will state her case from her point of view, and you, my darling, shall be the sole judge of conduct which seems to you now cruel and obdurate.

Ever, my dear girl,

Your devoted,

ANSWER TO LETTER XXI

October.

DEAREST,—I am sorry to have missed Arthur. Why did he not ride over here as I could not go to him? Pray tell him how very glad I should have been to see him. I shall hope for better luck the next time he comes home.

I am reading little, dearest. Somehow I I seem unable to follow the sorrows and joys of other lovers, my own are so very prominent and asserting; and with other characters in the book I have lost touch, and feel neither interest nor sympathy. Your letters come like a breath of summer to a half-frozen cripple shivering on the wayside. I inhale them. They fill me with warmth and light, and I am grateful, dearest, though

I am so poor in words to express what I feel. I cannot but wonder at my former interest in book people. Even Sherlock Holmes fails to reawaken in me the slightest regret at his untimely end, and if I feel interest in any one in his stories, it is in the quarry ferreted out by the detective weasel and hunted down by the hounds of the law. I have had these feelings strengthened by reading my dear father's letters to my mother from the first Assizes over which he presided as Judge. Some time, dear one, I will read these letters to you, that you may know and love my dear father for my sake, and honour one of the best men ever created. But to return to books. I read chapters without taking in a word of the subject. You stand between me and the page. I see you in every line, and when I come to the end of what I have passed over, I find that not one word has impressed me. Long ago, before my own romance began, I, like you, wished my heroine to live. But after the

honeymoon one can never go on intimately with her, and keep up romantic interest. We are compelled to remember that the relentless parent was also once a heroine, that she probably had her love affair and struggled against objections and obstructions, came out victorious, and then settled down to the duties of wife and mother, in which she included the settlement of her sons and daughters. No, we cannot follow her into the pantry, or write sonnets to her as she sits at her desk, though it be beautifully inlaid and a wedding present from the hero. She is doing the household books and comparing the prices of fish and vegetables with last week's quotations. No, no, dear, it is best she should die, best for us to shed a tear over her early grave, and hang her portrait in the gallery of our memory.

I cannot find a man for you, dearest, when I am gone. Richard Feveral might do. Of course you would not expect love

in return for your empty heart, and R. F. would only want a sympathetic listener to a constant recital of the virtues and graces of his dear departed. Ten thousand thanks for the letters, dearest; how good you are to me. They shall have the innermost place, and your sweet words shall be printed large on the envelope of my heart. Good-night! Bless you, my dearest.

ANSWER TO LETTER XXII

October.

Dearest,—I received late last night your sweet ante-betrothal letters. Instead of tasting such dainties sparingly, I devoured the whole pile at a sitting, and now I want more. I cry for the seven that are my due. Why leave off at S's? What excuse have you for neglecting these other seven? They protest, and I plead for them. I cry out for my rights. Surely such letters were never before written. Intensely interesting in themselves, they make the most enthralling reading; and it is not my vanity that speaks, for I never do nor ever shall realise that these beautiful thoughts and eloquent words are addressed to me; and this is the most convincing proof I have

ever had that I possess what our American cousins call a level head; otherwise, my dear girl, it would be spinning around with conceit.

The foot! It seems quiet and contentedly happy, but the nurse says I shall not be able to depend upon it for support for yet another week. However, that sentence had been mitigated by the promise of a drive, and you know the direction the horses' heads will take upon that occasion.

Au revoir, dearest; my letters are unworthy return for yours, but I will measure love with you, and outstrip you by leagues and leagues.

Ever your devoted,

ANSWER TO LETTER XXIII

DEAREST,—Only this line of regret that the heavens have decreed against my going out to-day. How it pours! But it has cleared the air inside and outside for me, and I am grateful, for yesterday the atmosphere around my sofa was murky. My mother and Aunt Mac were much against my contemplated drive, and not a little worried, perhaps irritated, that the nurse could not be brought to repentance for having suggested such a thing. There was some gentle rustling and wrangling, and then a peal of distant thunder brought a cessation of the mild hostilities, and this morning's downpour has drowned out the vexed question. Nurse says it will rain

for three days, and I have come to accept nurse as an infallible authority on most subjects. If she be a true prophet here, I shall not see your dear face for three ages; all communication will be cut off, except by carrier dove. Send me an olive branch if you are first to see the rainbow.

Some visitors are arriving to-night. They are Americans. Uncle Mac met them last year in Canada. A father and daughter. They were very kind to the stranger within their gates. A shocking epidemic of influenza was raging, and had seized my uncle at a most uncomfortable hotel; these dear people took him in hand, nursed him through the worst of it, then bundled him up and took him to their palatial home in New York, not the city, but the state. There he remained till discharged by the doctor, and not a word of all this did my aunt hear till he was safe and sound at home. From that day till this Aunt Amy has written by every post,

and now they are making her quite happy by this visit. Every one in the county has been apprised of the approaching visit, and there are twenty invitations awaiting them. My mother will probably ask them to visit us at Bournemouth. But what we are to do here with visitors in this deluge, I know not.

Ever, darling, your devoted,

ANSWER TO LETTER XXIV

October.

My dove has not come back, so I suppose she has found resting place for her pretty pink-lined foot. The waters have ceased, but the steam from the soaking earth which the sun exhales is hot and deadly in its depressing qualities. I have no good and sufficient other reason for the down-in-the-mouth feeling that has taken possession of me. For though there is no letter from you to-day, I know one is on its way, and that your silence yesterday only meant that you were better employed than by wasting your sweetness on this desert air.

The visitors came; Uncle Mac brought them down, and they are not the least what

we were given to expect. Mr. Burk is a quiet gentlemanly man of fifty, with abundant hair, slightly grey, worn longer than is usual with men here. He speaks with an intonation unusual with us, but without accent. Miss Burk is far more beautiful than we expected from Uncle Mac's description, and she is the best dressed woman or girl I have ever seen. My mother and Aunt Mac will take her to the flower show tomorrow. Do go, dearest, and meet them there. I do not like your exclusiveness. That bit of yesterday's letter in which you say you never call on neighbours distressed me. I think you have a wrong impression of the neighbours. We are all on the most friendly terms here, and nothing can exceed their kindness to me since the accident. I know what it is, dearest; one gets fairly morbid living always in the country with companions so much older than one's self. During the first year of our terrible bereavement, my mother and I saw nobody.

We never went outside the park gates, and we became so afraid of being spoken to by our neighbours that we used to leave the church before service was over, or remain in the pew till every one had gone. I was harder to cure of this mental disorder than was my mother. Another year of it and the disease would have become chronic. It is so unfortunate, darling, that I am laid up just now, otherwise I could take you to these out-of-door festivities, and Aunt Amy would introduce you to the neighbours. I most particularly wish you and these new friends the Burks to meet. How can it be managed ?

Ever, dearest, your devoted,

ANSWER TO UNPUBLISHED LETTER

October.

DEAREST,—I am so sorry to have offended. Indeed, indeed, dearest, you are all in all to me. If it were not so, should I have asked you to join me in life's journey? But the life you depict is quite impossible. We cannot walk through the world without meeting our fellow beings, and our happiness depends in a great measure upon how we meet them. Your own pet philosopher says: "A friend is Nature's masterpiece," and my friends are very dear and must become yours. It is most sweet to hear you say you will not divide one minute of my life with any human being, but I

assure you, darling, a month of my undivided self would terminate in some desperate act on your part. As for me, dear, I am very fond of society, the society of congenial friends and of interesting people. Do you know an old song in which some selfish brute of the masculine gender sings :—

"The rose that all are praising
Is not the rose for me;
Too many eyes are gazing
Upon the faultless tree.
But there's a rose in yonder glen
That scorns the gaze of other men:
For me its beauty saving—
Oh! that's the rose for me."
&c., &c.

I don't know where it comes from. My old nurse used to sing it. Whoever wrote such abominable sentiment ought to have had a douche in the horse-pond.

All this kind of sentiment is to me unwholesome. Let us live healthy lives,

darling, loving one another and fulfilling our responsibilities and the obligations of life to the utmost of our ability. In this is happiness.

Lovingly your devoted,

ANSWER TO UNPUBLISHED LETTER

My Darling,—Say not one other word. Forgive you? Dearest, what are you saying? Forgive you for your too great devotion to my most unworthy self? Forgive me, dearest, if for one instant my letter caused you pain. Forget it, sweetheart. Skip over it, and believe me,

Ever and ever,
Your loving,

ANSWER TO LETTER XXVI

October.

Robert brought your little messenger, darling: and you after all send out the dove and the olive branch.

No, dearest, you did not see me on the hill. My foot is not yet well enough for the stirrup. I drove out for half an hour yesterday with my mother and Miss Burk. Cards had to be left after the garden party and flower show.

I am writing now in great haste: I find myself in really great demand. Uncle Mac and Mr. Burk are out all day, and there is a constant stream of visitors here. I am promoted to a sofa in Aunt Mac's morning

room, and there I seem to hold a daily levee. I hope you are looking forward to that ride to Canterbury. This season I am determined it shall come off.

Ever yours devotedly,

ANSWER TO LETTER XXVII

October.

DEAREST,—It was the sermon, I am sure of it; you give me credit for a good temper, and few things put me out, but I am simply exasperated Sunday after Sunday at leaving the beautiful world, the fresh air, and all that God has granted us for happiness, and at being shut up within the four walls of a hideous temple that would disgrace the heathen, there to listen to platitudes and wearying repetitions. True, we smug rich Christians have all the religious comfort that money can secure. We drive to the temple, receiving homage from the poor man on his way to church; he who having worked from morning till night for six days, is expected upon the seventh to walk some miles, often

through wind or rain; who sits upon a hard seat to listen to a service that he knows by heart, and to a sermon devoid of interest or instruction; and then we dash past him as he plods home again to his Sunday dinner, prepared by a woman who never sees the inside of a church, and who must share the threatened consequences with our coachman. Just at present I have a subject of thought so all engrossing that I can be quite happy wherever I am left along with it. I can think my own thoughts and build my castles through the droning of the services. Even Uncle Mac's aggressive responses fail to turn the pleasant current, though his "Amen" is rather a snag in the stream; but I might as well try to ignore the pain of the bad foot as to shut out what they call the music. The organ is out of tune, and so is the congregation, and the combined effect is disturbing, to say the least of it. There is so much wealth in this parish that the cheapness of everything

connected with the church can mean only one thing, that is, want of interest in the institution. The building itself put up on the cheapest lines. The money for it procured by any invention by which money can be wrung from the pockets of the unwilling; the High Priest chosen must be a man who will condescend to any device for the support of a rapidly decaying institution in which the people have lost interest. In early days of Christianity, the rich gave of their best to build the noble temples which unbelieving generations have allowed to fall into ruin and decay. We need no other argument than these neglected monuments of piety and veneration to show us that the spirit which created them has departed from us; we no longer practise, or believe, in what we had best call ancient Christianity. Modern Christianity is a worship of the golden calf, to which the whole world has been converted.

Forgive me, my darling, for writing what

I will not venture to read over lest it find its way into the waste paper basket instead of the post office. In the fulfilment of my dear father's wish that I should adopt a political career, I am groping my way in and about a labyrinth of questions, many of which startle me by their inconsistency with the fundamental laws which we are told were made for our guidance and government. We, you and I, should know one another. I want your interest and the help of your brilliant mind to cheer and assist me in distinguishing and adopting the right course.

Dearest, I want you! When, when am I to have a date which will limit our separation?

Your devoted,

ANSWER TO LETTER XXVIII

October.

DEAREST,—We have indeed been flying in opposite directions. I, my mother, Aunt Mac, and Miss Burk started by limited mail last night for the Highlands. Uncle Mac and Mr. Burk were to have met us at Perth, but arriving there this morning we had a message from the two sportsmen. Mr. Burk wired to his daughter that he was staying over a day to visit the house where Sir Walter wrote "Rokeby," and to view the scenes which inspired the poet. I remember the house quite well. It is built on great rocks overlooking the confluence of two rivers, a most romantic spot. I spent a holiday once at Barnard Castle, and we fished in both streams. I had

quite forgotten the circumstance till Mr. Burk's telegram recalled the scenes, but not the names, to me. Uncle Mac has been shooting at Raby, where they were kind enough to ask my uncle's guest, Mr. Burk, to join the party. The country up there on the border is very beautiful, and they have had good sport. Mr. Burk sends his daughter a daily telegram of great length in place of a letter, which he says he has no time to write. The extravagance of this quite upset Aunt Mac. "I should think it would take almost as long to count the words of such a message as to write a note," she said, as Miss B. unfolded and read out the message. "Do you have to count your own words?" asked Miss Burk; "we never do; the telegraph clerk counts the words when we hand in the message." "And it matters not what it costs?" says my Aunt. "Oh! yes, it does matter, but we can't lessen the expense by counting," replies this young princess of the Republic.

I think I told you that my uncle has taken Spawn Castle for the season. Miss Burk, who had never before been a guest at a real castle, and who had evidently formed her opinion of "Spawn" from her father's telegraphic description of "Raby," was ill prepared for the small ugly stone house to which some pretentious proprietor had given the name of "Castle," and I confess I felt some uneasiness for the accommodation of Miss B.'s ark-like trunks, which followed us from the railway station and had an omnibus all to themselves. The servants have been here for a week, and two guests had already arrived, friends of mine whom my Aunt Amy had asked for my sake. I shall get no shooting. My foot would stand no serious work, and complains at a walk across the lawn. Uncle Mac and Mr. Burk arrive to-night, and for this first week Mr. and Miss Burk, Captain Molloy, and Fred Theluson form the house party.

I will tell you all about every one in my next. There is little to tell you about the house; it is meanly furnished with cheap modern things, and is very badly lighted. The bedrooms small, cold, and dark. One bathroom in the whole establishment. Aunt Mac has despatched messengers in all directions for lamps and candles. She is much chagrined at the poverty and meanness of the place. She and my uncle took it on the recommendation of a friend.

When the light comes, dearest, I will write again. You will receive my two previous letters probably with this. I had not the least intimation where to write till yesterday, so sent the letters to Blankley to be forwarded. I cannot quite understand A. M. whipping you off to the Continent at this time of the year. I suppose it is all right, but I do think she might have written me before and not after the departure.

Ever your devoted,

ANSWER TO LETTER XXIX

October.

DEAREST,—I am not sorry that you only stopped to rest your wings at Lucerne. But what tempted you to light amongst the tombstones I cannot guess. On your next visit I promise you something better worth seeing. I love Lucerne only less than Geneva, and I love the latter best, not at all for that in which Lucerne excels, the loveliest scenery to me in the world, but for its associations with the very happiest of my happy student days. I also saw Lucerne in all its varying phases of loveliness. I was there for a whole year. I know every expression of the fair face, and how to enjoy even its bad tempers, and I have witnessed some outbursts. I am told

that they have made a railway up Pilatus, and that the dragon which pulls you up reeks with uncleanliness, smothers you with cinder, and with smoke which shuts out everything but a view of the monster engine. To me Pilatus was most interesting on the road to the top ; there was scarcely a step in the climb from which one did not get a glimpse of some exquisite bit of snow-capped mountain, sapphire sky, or of the silvery lake. I was never so fortunate as to get a good view from the top. However fine the day during the ascent, I always came in for mist and cloud on the summit, but I was always well repaid for my disappointment in that respect by the delight of the ascent and descent.

It is a great comfort to me, and it must be a still greater comfort to you, that Arthur is with you.

We are all (except the principal actors in the play) greatly amused in witnessing a little comedy being acted here. Both

Molloy and Theluson are in love with Miss Burk. Theluson has the attack in its mildest form, and is, I think, already out of danger. But Molloy's temperature never varies, and the nurse (did I tell you Aunt Mac had brought her up for rest and change?) thinks the crisis near, and that the symptoms are serious. As for the object, she gives no sign. She accepts idolatry as her due, and is as happy as a bird. Theluson has not had much chance from the first, for Molloy sings for her and with her, and they play duets together, and make the most enchantingly good company for us all, and something cheery inside is appreciated, for it has poured without one half hour's cessation for two days.

Ever, darling, your devoted,

ANSWER TO LETTER XXX

Spawn Castle, N.B.

November.

My Dearest,—The very best thing you could have done, having skipped into Pisa, was to skip out again. We were not so lucky, my mother and I, when we were running a race across the Continent; we too were "bumped down" there one drizzling morning, but rapid as had been our pace, influenza which we had left raging in Paris followed, caught us up at Pisa, and held us there for ten days. We knew nothing of the propagating power of the microbe then, we treated the malady as an ordinary cold, and went about spreading it broadcast. I had the baptistery all to myself after the first few visits, for when

the official opened his mouth, the fiendish microbe dropped into it with the centimes, and the old man disappeared, so whenever I liked, I sent my voice up to play battledore and shuttlecock with the echoes in the roof, which amusement so far as I could make out was the only one in Pisa. After the first day or two we found the silence of the City of Palaces so oppressive, that we fairly held out our hands in welcome to a terrific thunderstorm, which shook our hotel, and I am convinced gave an additional list to the Leaning Tower; then after a deluge of rain, we went out and "did" the churches and the galleries, and I added one more bit of colour to the kaleidoscopic memory pictures I brought home with me from that flight over Italy.

Dearest, I do not mind your flying from pillar to post now, providing you take proper care of your precious self, for is not a time coming when we are to "drift" whither soft breezes waft and friendly

currents will? But I do wonder what can be M. A.'s hurry. What has she to fly from? Or is she under the impression that you are flying from me, and that it is good for you? I am sure, dearest, you will not wonder at my surprise at this unexpected move on her part. Both she and your uncle have accepted me, I will not say unreservedly, but they have made me welcome to their house, and have always been kind and cordial. I have obeyed to the letter all that has been required of me, and I have repeatedly asked that a time be fixed for our marriage. Then all at once came news of you from a place in England of which you had never spoken to me, no letters for three weeks from you, short notes from M. A., speaking of doctor's orders, and of your "slight indisposition." Then this sudden departure from England and the race across the Continent, and, dearest, I must include you in my grumble, in your sweetest of

sweet letters you never answer a question, and the question of all others, that of nearest and dearest interest to us both, you entirely ignore. Why is this? My darling, is there a reason for it, or is it only accident? Surely we should be entirely frank with each other, we who are on the eve of a partnership for life, we should fully explain our circumstances, and make known everything which could in any way affect our future relations. Have I left anything unsaid, or undone, which has caused you to pause before compromising yourself to the final step? If so, dearest, tell me, tell me, for your wishes are and your happiness is my first consideration, that you must understand, do you not?

Dearest, I think I have had all your letters. But I cannot be certain, for you *never* date them, and sometimes the postmark is illegible. Dear love to your sweet self, and kindest remembrances to M. A., and also to Arthur. I am writing from the

sofa again. I will give you particulars in my next. We were all to have gone on an excursion to a place about fifteen miles from this, where there is a magnificent view of loch, moor and mountain. The house party have gone. I am spending the day with a bandaged foot.

Your devoted,

LETTER WHICH CROSSED LETTER XXXI

My Dearest,—"Conscience makes cowards of us all," and I am trembling. I cannot imagine what fiend robbed me of good spirits yesterday, and set me grumbling, and to-day, though you do not mean it, you have punished me, for I have no letter. There was no cause for the deep dark blueness in which I sat all day yesterday, and with which I was so saturated that it flowed out from the point of my pen. There could be no outside cause, for nothing has changed since then, and to-day the world is *couleur de rose* down to the line of the horizon.

Yesterday was perfect. There had been

rain in the night which brought out the perfume of the heather, and gave a brighter tinge of purple to the hills. The sky was as blue as any you have seen in Italy, and the air up here is keen and bracing. The horses came around after breakfast saddled and bridled and in the most splendid condition and spirits. Uncle Mac, Miss Burk, I, Theluson and Molloy were to ride. My mother, Aunt Mac, and Mr. Burk were to drive. I gave my foot a twist in the night, the swelling came back and I never left the sofa all day. I saw the party off from the window. Molloy had the audacity to take my horse instead of the one saddled for him, a restless creature that one could plainly see would be no party to a *tête-à-tête*. My mother was for staying behind with me, indeed they all, except Molloy and Miss Burk, offered to put off the excursion till I could join them, but I would not hear of that. Molloy, selfish brute, rode away with Miss

Burk. Theluson has evidently retired from the contest, and has left the field to the Irishman. So with nurse and a bandaged foot for companions I remained at home a prisoner. The disappointment rankled and I took to grumbling. Should the demon of the post-bag for once intervene in my favour, and deliver this letter first, please, dear, throw the other unopened to the ravens, or to any other croakers which encumber the earth. I cannot remember just what I wrote, but I have an impression that a blue d—l possessed me, and that my pen sketched him and sent you the result.

I continued in the depths till an amusing incident brought back my good spirits. I am not naturally malicious and given to exult in the downfall of a friend, but when Molloy returned alone yesterday about five o'clock, went immediately to his room, and then came down to me with an open letter in his hand (which was probably an in-

vitation to dinner, or a tailor's bill) and with an expression of concern informed me that "business of importance" called him back to Ireland, I could not but laugh.

"What brought you back from the hills?" I asked in a tone as sympathetic as I could command.

"I was not wanted, so I left the field to them that were," was the reply.

"Theluson?" I asked, and I must confess I felt angry for the moment for the poor crushed Hibernian.

"Theluson!" he said, and contempt itself was in the word. "I'm not vain, mind you, but I'm not modest enough to think any woman living would put Mark Theluson before me. If there is such a 'wan,' he's welcome to her."

Away he went, he could not be here when they came back, he said, and I was to make his excuses.

It was late when they returned. I had hobbled away to dress, but when we met

not a word was said about Molloy, by which sign I knew that my made up excuses were unnecessary. As for Miss Burk, she had brought down her bird, and thought no more of it.

Adieu, dearest, am I to know when to expect you?

Ever your devoted,

ANSWER TO LETTER XXXII

November,
Sunday.

DEAREST,—I cannot tell you how glad I was to see that our letters had crossed and that the evil day for your answer to the grumble is postponed. You will have received both my last, and will have heard all about the foot, and how it has misbehaved, and of poor Molloy's misfortune. The Burks, father and daughter, have gone to Inverness for the Sunday. They are Catholics, and bound to be present at the Mass when possible, so they have gone to an hotel till Monday. The house seems terribly dull to-day, and the beautiful weather has gone. The bright sky is overcast with slaty-blue clouds, which cut off the mountain tops,

and are so packed into the south-west corner of the world by a north-east wind that there is not room for another vapour. Uncle Mac and Theluson rode down to the station with our guests, and what was left of us had tea here with the poor cripple. The tea had its usual effect, we all fell to discussing our neighbours, Molloy's affair particularly. I said I was sorry for him. Aunt Mac, though sympathetic, says that suddenly kindled and fierce flames burn themselves out with a flash, and leave no cinders. My mother has no merciful excuse for the rash youth, and thinks his haste indecent, and his presumption unparalleled. Nurse, who was made acquainted with the affair, did not blame the young man for having at once fallen a victim to the charms of Miss B., whom she speaks of with enthusiasm. Nurse released the poor foot from its bandages to-day; the swelling has gone down considerably, but a boot is still out of

all question, and I am not a little discouraged. My trip abroad seems farther off than ever, for I should want a pair of sound legs to catch up with M. A. and your party, a foot and a half would not stand much chance. Your dear letters are charming, and your criticisms most original. I must say no more on the sight-seeing subject, or I shall grumble again, for I do feel robbed by the M. A. of my perquisites. There will be nothing left for me to show you of the scenes I love to remember. You are seeing them all. So we must form an exploration company "Limited," and drift into undiscovered regions.

Good-bye, dearest,

Ever yours devotedly,

ANSWER TO UNPUBLISHED LETTER

DEAREST,—I bow my head for the coals of fire. No sinner was ever more penitent, or more truly grateful for absolution. As for the dispensation, I accept the grant, have "staked out my claim," and begin this instant to draw on my future prospects. During these days when no letters came, I did penance by nursing my remorse in solitude. I withdrew from the delightful circle, which Uncle Mac has somehow managed to lodge within the four walls of this stone jug—where Aunt Amy has stowed them (six in addition to the Burks) is a mystery which we had best not investigate. The ladies' maids are all at the lodge, I believe there is a strike on, and nurse has gone down to

mediate ; there was a little passage at arms this morning just outside my door between Lady D.'s maid and Aunt Mac's housekeeper. Said Frenchy, "I have never been ask beefore to sleep out of za house. It is shockin. I will tell me Lady. I cannot at all put up with treatment like this. Castle! Castle!! *pour rire!*" "No," replies the Scotchwoman, "that's not the name, such as it is, it's called Spawn Castle. We can make it no bigger or grander. I suppose you were brought up in a *shattoo*, that you are so parteecular." There was a rustle of retreat, and I believe quiet has been restored. Now to draw on the dispensation. Do you know, dearest, that you do not answer, nor do you give the least attention to my questions? *When are you coming home? When are we to be married?* Sweetheart, I will not worry you to answer these questions now, if there be any reason for your silence. I will say nothing more after this letter till I see you. I will take

it for granted that there is some little mystery which you are not at liberty to explain, and I will trust to time to make things clear.

Adieu, my dearest, I shall be here now till the twentieth, two weeks longer, unless you return before then.

Ever your devoted,

ANSWER TO LETTER XXXIII

Dearest,—I am rejoiced to hear that you have found such a resting place for your weary wings, and that you are up and out of the heat, which should not be terrific in Florence just now. D.'s Villa is one of the places I remember best at Florence. There is a view from the library window which is worth to me more than all the pictures and sculptured images in the treasure houses below. If that library and that window were mine, and I could sit there with you by my side, I would not change the situation for the ownership of the whole Florentine collection. I am rather a savage about pictures. I would rather look upon a beau-

tiful scene than possess the finest picture of it ever painted. All the same I should not like to live without pictures on my walls, and we have at home a few of the best ever painted. My dear father, whose taste was exquisite, never bought a picture till his means could reach the best; he had it hung where we looked at it every day, we grew familiar with the treatment of the subject, and with the style of the artist, and always and ever since I have hailed all pictures by the same man as near and dear relations. For a long time we had only one painting. Then another, and another, came into the family circle, we children soon learnt to recognise the work of the painters as we should recognise the faces of friends and acquaintances, and my mother tells me that when my brother Arthur was ten he knew every picture by our favourite artists in the National Gallery to which he was taken by the governess as a reward of merit, as other children are taken to Madame

Tussaud's. But though we knew our friends and loved them when we met, we loved far more the scenes which inspired them, and pictures however beautiful were to us only reflections. Yet it must be to other circumstances, as well as to the beauty and grandeur of nature, that Florence owes the great men whose names are known and venerated throughout the world. For the beauty and the grandeur of nature remains, and the great men have ceased to be. We have our share of splendid nature here, and though we have not the flame-like background in which Italian mountains are set, our opals are magnificent. As I write, the great mountains, dark to blackness on this side, stand out against a rainbow sky, sprinkled over with jewelled clouds. This is our one advantage over your skies. We have clouds. An hour ago great banks of silver rose up behind Ben Nevis, and made a range of snowy Alps for us. It was like Mont Blanc at sunset crowned half an hour

later with a diadem of gold set with variegated jewels. And the air here is so cold and crisp that it makes a wood fire welcome, that is another advantage over your Italy. But yet that library and the view from its window! That still holds the first place, and is hung on the line in a picture gallery I have all to myself.

I only heard by accident that your Uncle N. was in this neighbourhood. Uncle Mac rode over to the F——, and left cards. Every one was out. Then I sent a groom with a note over to inquire how long he (Uncle N.) was to be here, and to this no answer has come. And to-day I have heard incidentally, that he has gone on to visit the H.'s, and that Annie H. is to return south with him, taking all her family. Does this mean that M. A. has decided to prolong her stay abroad? It does not seem to occur to these good people that I ought to be furnished with particulars of their movements, which include yours. This letter must go

to Florence, though it will probably reach you at Venice. The D.'s will forward it. I have no address for Venice, remember that.

Lovingly yours,

ANSWER TO LETTERS XXXIV, XXXV AND XXXVI

Dearest,—I am sending this out into the world in search of you. Not an address have I since Villa D——, Florence. I think I shall send my next to your Uncle N., to be forwarded, he has possibly an address that will find his belongings. I have had no word from him, and I should have thought my messages had never reached him, but for his acknowledgment to you of my visits. Your letters from Venice are charming as usual. Nay, more so, if possible. They would have been answered separately had I been favoured with an address, but Venice, Italy, would probably not find Miss ——, and I have nothing

more definite. If this should meet your eye, you will learn that I am moving south this day week. I shall go directly to H——g, where I have business to settle. My mother will remain here with Aunt Mac till they all come south. Our visitors also leave next week to make way for others. I think I am too conservative for the change. These people, especially the Burks, have become associated with the place. I do not think I could be civil to those who come to supplant them, so we move off together. I have the B.'s promise of a visit to ——, later in the year, or early in next, and I must see that things are not going to rack and ruin there during this long absence. If you should receive this you will perhaps be able to send me an address that will find you. Till I have it, dearest, I will send no more scraps of paper floating about Italy.

Lovingly, dearest, your devoted,

ANSWER TO LETTER XXXIX

DEAREST,—I am most grateful for the mention of Mr. C., as it enables me to find you. I send this letter to his care, and trust he may be the means of resuming communication between us. I don't wonder that you are compunctious. I am glad to know that you are not hardened beyond compunction, and now that there is a certain amount of probability of your getting this I am going to exercise my preordained authority, and myself answer the question I have asked *I believe six times*, "When are we to be married?" On the 14th day of February next. St. Valentine's day. Where? Any place within the British Isles, that you, my dear, may choose. I

have already announced this to my mother, she is moved as I have never before known her to be, but finding all argument unavailing, she has promised to say no more, but to let things take their course. So, dearest, it is to be neutrality, but armed neutrality, I fear. And now we must settle other matters. I shall hope to hear by your answer to this of the exact date fixed for your return. I want to know where your Uncle N. is now, that the lawyers may set to work and have everything settled and finished up long before the eventful day. Now, please, dearest, attend to this my earnest request. We left Spawn on Saturday morning, and reached London late in the evening. Our departure was most difficult to manage. Nothing would induce the Burks, father and daughter, to start out on a Friday, and they must be in London for Sunday, or again take lodgings in Inverness. So at last it was arranged to leave Spawn at five o'clock Saturday

morning, drive to D., and there catch the express, which does not stop at the nearer station. Accordingly the heavy luggage was sent off on Friday, and we were up and off by the crack of dawn Saturday morning. Uncle Mac's leave-taking of Miss Burk was quite pathetic. He has formed a sincere attachment for the girl and she returns his affection like a loving daughter. When taking leave at the station at D., with his old world courtesy he kissed her pretty hand, she put her other arm quite naturally around his neck and kissed him twice. "One," she said, "for you, and one for dear, dear Aunt Mac."

These dear childless people, whom a bountiful Providence has left nothing else to ask for, feel keenly in their old age the loneliness of their position. Miss Burk has stepped into their hearts, and I am sure she has come to stay. I ought to feel jealous, for I know I was in possession before she came and evicted me.

We arrived late in London and came to this hotel. I for the night only, all my luggage except one small portmanteau was sent direct to —— on Friday, and I was to have followed on Sunday. But at Mr. Burk's earnest request, I am remaining over a few days. The Burks are to sail in a week, and Mr. Burk wants to see for himself, so far as that is possible, the working of certain economic laws which are established and practised in our country, and are exactly the opposite of laws affecting the same question in the U. S. Mr. B. has long represented the interests of his State in Congress. I have never known any one except my dear father, whose views of life are so broad and free from prejudice. Mr. Burk's conversation has given me subject for much thought, and he has placed many things in a new light which has developed important points never seen before. Miss B. is also a keen politician, and strange to say not altogether of her

father's school. I do wish sincerely that you two knew one another. I am determined you shall meet. I am sure she will be captivated by your original way of seeing, and by your eloquence in describing, the life around you.

Ever, dearest, your devoted,

ANSWER TO LETTER XL

Ten thousand thanks, dearest, for your consent to my proposed arrangement. Then February it is to be, and to church we will go on St. Valentine's Day, and the bells of H. shall be set ringing and there will be no "struggle" to make or to resist either at the beginning or the end. There is nothing to fear, dearest, of any "overt sign of preparation" vexing my dear mother; some day you will understand how impossible it would be for her to think of herself where my interests came in opposition to hers, if such a thing could be as our interests not being the same. Take my word for this, dearest, and so let this most unfortunate state of affairs rest so far as we can, we

cannot control them. I shall be very busy now getting H. ready for occupation in February, and I have also to put the Dower House in proper condition. With regard to any changes or alterations at H. I shall wait for your return to settle details. There is no use writing about the adornments of an ordinary country house whilst you are dwelling with Michael Angelo in his palaces. Aye! but I have been in a nice temper more than once with these "pleasure palaces" and pictures when having written to you on some matter requiring an answer, you have sent me back a description of a church, or filled pages with an acknowledged and distracting attachment to one Capaccio.

Sweetheart, I have been studying you of late, and this is the result of my research. Your nature is so attractive to certain affinities that they crowd in and so completely occupy you for the time being that there is no room for any other tenants. Up

to the fifth of last month and for long before I was in occupation. Then in rushed painters, sculptors and architects, and crowded me out, and here I stand shivering on the doorstep waiting till there is room for me. I wonder if you will feel interested to know that wedding presents are arriving. There came yesterday a wonderfully beautiful silver bowl of Italian workmanship. It was sent us by an old friend of my father's now living abroad. Miss Burk, who saw the bowl, says it is of the Benvenuto Cellini type. The modelling or moulding, called, I believe, *repoussé*, is exquisitely beautiful. There are many other things, and all from friends to whom it is, I am sure, a pleasure to show me that my father's son is remembered. I met a gentleman at the Club yesterday, who told me he had a *souvenir* for me which I must see. We took a cab and went to his house, and there he showed me a portrait of my father as I

best remember him. It was painted by W——s, then the man of his day, and is accounted his masterpiece. "There was a man," Mr. —— said, as he led me up to the picture. "Take him for all in all we shall not look upon his like again."

Then he told me how my father had differed with great authorities in a certain case. How he had fought it out and won it. How it had saved his, Mr. ——'s family from the loss of estates that had been centuries theirs, and how this picture had been painted in honour of the victory, and was to be mine. You will not be surprised to hear that I had no words at my disposal with which to thank Mr. —— for this precious gift. There was a great obstruction to speech in my throat, but I wrote to him last night, and I hope he knows how I appreciate his great kindness, and the value of his gift—to me invaluable, and intrinsically a small fortune.

It is difficult to reconcile the taking away of such a life as that of my dear father's, with the benevolence of an all benevolent Providence. It is best to think it no part of Divine intention, but an accident of nature. So good and loyal a Christian gentleman, what had he done to have been deprived of life, every instant of which he enjoyed with a keenness indescribable? And what had we done to have been so severely punished by his loss? I find no answer except that having fulfilled his mission here, he has gone on to the next step in the great scheme of creation. That he had won his promotion by the use he made whilst here of the ray of Divine light conferred upon him by his Creator.

Dearest, I feel that I must set to work—that something more than the life I am leading now is expected of my father's son. It is a high standard of excellence that I see before me. Intellectually I shall never

reach it, but with your dear hand in mine, I mean to attempt the ascent, even to gain the first step of which will place us far above the dead level.

Ever, my darling, your devoted,

ANSWER TO UNPUBLISHED LETTER AND ANSWER TO LETTER XL

DEAREST,—I am so grieved that my letter should have pained you. Indeed, I do believe that you love me in your own way. I suppose my mind is too practical to follow the bright flashes of your genius, your unquestionable genius. So, dearest, love me in your own sweet way. All the same I feel dreadfully crushed, packed in your "capacious heart" with all these statues and pictures. No, dearest, I am not coming. You evidently have not observed a certain paragraph in my last letter, in which I mentioned that I am on my way to H—— to prepare the house for the occupation of a tenant for life who is

expected next February. That will occupy what I am pleased to call my mind for many days, and the evenings I shall give up to writing you letters with a full account of the day's doings ; and I must also give time and thought to questions political, which now obscure my view of the road I have just been asked to enter upon, and which I have decided to travel when I can clearly see my way. Remember me to Arthur, I am sorry to hear he has been hit. These first affairs are amusing to outsiders, and they hurt all the more because no one but the principals take them seriously.

Good-bye, my dearest, my next will be from our future home.

Ever your devoted,

ANSWER TO LETTER XLI

December.

My Dearest,—If you have not travelled faster than electricity you will have received my message, and will be looking out for me at every stopping place.

The explanation of my sudden change of plan is that I find nothing whatever to keep me here. The house is in the most perfect order. My mother will not occupy the dower house; she has decided upon keeping on the Bournemouth place for the present, but she will come to H—— to prepare the house for February. So I am at liberty to start on a race after you and shall cross to-morrow night, D.V., with the Burks, who are still in England. Mr. B.

is not well, and they have changed their plans, and will now go abroad to Italy for the waters of Lucca.

Au revoir, dearest,

Yours ever devotedly,

ANSWER TO LETTER XLII

BRUSSELS,
December.

DEAREST,—I hope you had my telegram before you left Innsbruck, otherwise the fate of this letter must be Poste Restante at Zurich till I arrive. In your last you gave me no address. I left instructions in London and at H—— that my letters of yesterday be forwarded here. If I get no intimation to-morrow of where I am likely to overtake you, I think I had best remain where I am till I hear from you. Switzerland is a largish place to play hide and seek in, and we might miss each other altogether. If I hear to-morrow that there is no change of plans on your part, I will start for Zurich on Tuesday morning, and be with you on Thursday. If the foreign

time-tables may be trusted, we can arrive at different stations at Zurich at the same moment.

There is not much to see here. It is a curious old town. In no other have I seen the bees so separated from the drones. Our hotel is in the midst of the drone population. From the window of my apartment I look into a paved square, surrounded by palatial mansions of gray stone or stucco, with closed doors and shuttered windows. There is a church at my left, of which I can see only some broad stone steps, upon these at this moment is the only human being in sight. Opposite and at the right there are signs indicating hotels and shops. Doors all closed, no one going in or out. These long rows of signboards remind me of a library door I once saw fitted up with dummy book bindings to imitate a bookcase. Now as I write there steals noiselessly into and across the square a spectre tramcar. It makes no noise, at least no

sound reaches me here. There is nobody in it. The horses' legs are evidently without joints, they never lift them but just slide first one and then the other along the asphalt. This is the view of Brussels from my side of the house. The Burks have an apartment just opposite. Their view is pleasanter because there is a garden about as large as that of Belgrave Square. This is called a park. It faces the King's palace, which is on a line with our hotel. Here the look-out is more enlivening. Three people were counted walking on the broad paved road which intervenes between the palace and the park, and there were two carts which made as much noise on the flagstones as would a regiment of artillery on an ordinary road. Leaving this silent city this morning after breakfast, we crossed the deserted square with its church and tramway, and descended a steep hill to the lower town. Here we were immediately in the midst of great activity. We heard

the *bourdonnement* long before we reached the end of the Rue Montagne de la Cour. There was plenty of movement here. People as much in a hurry and as preoccupied as those in and about our own hives in London.

At an old *bric-à-brac* place a curious incident occurred. We were looking in at a window when Mr. Burk left us and hurriedly went inside, where we found him with hat off, gazing in apparent amazement at a miniature. We stood at a little distance for five minutes, ten minutes, and yet Mr. B. stood with the little oval frame in his hand. Then Miss B. approached him. "Found something interesting?" she asked.

He handed her the miniature, which she looked at, Mr. B. watching her face the while. Without comment she passed it to me. I must confess I was startled. It was a beautifully finished miniature of Miss B. herself. "Your portrait!" I said

with astonishment. "Her mother's," said Mr. Burk.

I turned it over to see if any name was written on the back. There was nothing but the price, 2,000 *francs*, a circumstance to which we were obliged to call the dealer's attention, for he asked double. Mr. B. paid the money and we went back to our hotel, and investigated the purchase.

As well as I can I will describe to you the picture, and then you will have had a description of Miss B., for even to the way in which the hair is worn the faces are the same.

A broad, low forehead, from which rises in soft abundance the most beautiful auburn hair, or perhaps I should call it golden brown. Eyebrows scarcely arched, dark and beautifully pencilled; long eyelashes which fringe the loveliest dark blue eyes in the world; an oval face, a mouth made of cupid's bow and a strawberry, and a complexion like the petal of a wild rose.

Around the white throat in the miniature there is a string of pearls from which is suspended an open locket that once no doubt held a miniature infinitesimally small, and now nearly obliterated. We have been searching Brussels for magnifying glasses; by the aid of the most powerful one to be found, we are able to make out the face in profile of a man. It is a French face, grey hair imagined, for no trace of colour remains. The face retreating from the chin in a line, as most French faces do in profile. Mr. Burk is very silent since the discovery of the picture. He seemed desirous of being left to himself, so we went away and visited the Musée together.

Now I must finish this, or I shall lose the post.

Au revoir, dearest, I do hope I shall get some word from you to-morrow morning.

Ever your devoted,

LETTER XLIII

BRUSSELS,

December.

MY DEAR,—My letters and despatches arrived from England this morning, but not a line from you. So here I am waiting till called for. I should have started off in pursuit of you to-day, feeling that I could not endure this place after the Burks' departure, but Miss B. had entered into negotiations with a dressmaker, who has won my everlasting gratitude by disappointing the fair client, and they remain over to-morrow. Last night we dined at a restaurant and went afterwards to the opera. I was dressed long before my friends. Some curious impatience has come over me, and a disgust at my own company. Lately I cannot bear to be alone, so last

night, long before it was time to go out, I was sitting in the reading-room of the hotel, turning over the leaves of an old illustrated English pictorial, and lo! there was a sketch of Twloch Hill, and amongst other legends of that country side, is the story of Johnnie Kilgarrow. Do you remember it? And where I told it to you? Well, here I find in this old paper a full account of the punishment of those who set fire to the gorse, of which Johnnie Kilgarrow was keeper and guardian, and more than this, the paper goes on to state, "that the belief in the Giant's supernatural agency was confirmed by his disappearance one night in a thunder storm." If I ever go to Twloch again, I know a river and a barrow where I shall look for all that probably remains on earth of my giant friend, poor Johnnie Kilgarrow.

I was out of spirits all the evening, and Mr. Burk, seeing this, came up to my room and we sat together well into the wee small

hours. Mr. B. cleared away many of the mists which, as I told you, obscure the political road I am contemplating. But the clearer atmosphere, I am sorry to say, only shows one the extent of the obstructions. Mr. B. thinks we shall have to institute Parliamentary Despotism "limited," to a term of years, the despots to be (politically) killed off at the end of each term, but during their period of office they to be invested with power to clear away red tapism and other abominations, which now entangle and obstruct the machinery of government; an end devoutly to be wished for, however it may be achieved. I must say I look forward with anything but pride to the position of member of a parliament where a man has no power of independent action, but becomes a pawn in the hand of a party leader, and is often moved in opposition to his conscientious belief. But my father wished it, and my

father's friends expect it, and I shall do my best.

Hoping news of you to-morrow, dearest,

I am,

Your devoted,

LETTER XLIV

PARIS,

December.

MY EVER DEAREST,—I cannot understand the M. A. or your Uncle N., and letters only add to my bewilderment. I received your three last by the same post. Not one word or intimation do they contain of your last move. Indeed, in your letter from Riva you speak of our being together for a month, that was before I knew I could join you, and from Innsbruck still later, you speak of M. A. "conceding a month," and then when I was waiting to receive some definite account of your whereabouts, the telegram came to say you are all starting home. I left Brussels at once; my friends have gone to Lucca. I am returning to England in a week and shall hope to see M. A. and Uncle N., and make such *contre-*

temps as those of the past month impossible. I read all your sweet letters according to their numbers, and what a delightful story you have made of my Johnnie Kilgarrow. I was so touched and pleased, dearest, how can I thank you?

I never felt so entirely alone in my life, as I do in this great city. I do not know what has come over my usually good and very elastic spirits. I am down, down, down. I am devoutly thankful for one thing, and I believe I owe it to Arthur, that I was not allowed to go on to Zurich. I think I should have entered a monastery and there repented of the sin of ever having put faith in "mother, aunts,"—I was going to say "woman," but I know there is one little woman who is not responsible for my present disappointment and depression.

Good-bye, dearest, I shall hope to see you at Blankley this day week.

Your ever devoted,

LETTER XLV

December.

My Dear Dear,—I had no letter yesterday. I did not go over. I was, and am, depressed. The deep grief of one near and most dear to me is like a perpetually and grievously painful wound, and I cannot but think that we should make great concessions to such deep sorrow, though we may not be able to see its reasonableness. I am going to ask you, dearest, a very great favour. Will you explain, if you can, why we are never permitted to be alone together? and why of late, though your letters are all that the most exacting lover could ask, you receive me in the flesh as if I were a mere acquaintance? You look preoccupied, and you constantly watch your chaperon. What

does this mean? Shall I ask M. A. to explain it? Have I your permission, or will you tell me yourself?

My dearest love to you, my poor little girl; I am afraid you have some trouble which probably reflects upon the character of those you love, and therefore you conceal it for their sake. I know the situation, dearest, I have been there. Tell me just what you like, darling, as much or as little as you wish. I shall understand your silence where to speak frankly might compromise my good opinion of those you love. Do unto others as you would they should do unto you!! Feb. is not far off, and we shall have no secrets from each other after the blessed St. Valentine's Day!!

Lovingly and devotedly yours,

LETTER XLVI

December.

DEAREST,—I have just read your dear letter. I see you could not give an answer to my question. All right, dearest, I think I understand, and if I do not you do, and that should be all-sufficient to two people whose interests in a partnership are exactly identical. Dearest, believe me, there is no "fierce," though there is unexplained opposition, and nothing has come about that was not here from the first. And who has been so malicious as to talk to you about threats of poverty, etc., etc.? My future in that respect rests with none living. If you will remember, my mother told you I was my own master. Let *no one* talk to you of our private affairs; I

have forbidden it on my side since the day that some malicious person whispered in my mother's ears that which has caused all this trouble, that about mental infirmity in a certain family. You, dearest, mentioned it first to me, or I should not have written the word. Now, dearest, let us think of pleasanter things. I shall go to H——y next week, and I want M. A. to bring you down for a couple of days that certain matters may be arranged as you wish them. It is needless for me to say I am grieved at the existing state of things, but such interruptions to happiness is like a physical illness, and must be endured till it has run its course. Courage, dearest, the irritation will soon be over.

Ever your devoted,

LETTER XLVII

December.

DEAREST,—I am glad you sent Nan Nan to say her prayers. The prescription might judiciously be used for other patients. Dearest, there is a way in which, I will not say you can love me better, but in which you can make me happier, and that is by answering questions on subjects nearly affecting our comfort and convenience. I am waiting to hear if I am to ask M. A. to bring you to H——. I shall go over to-morrow and get the answer from M. A. herself. Do you happen to observe that we are in the month of December, and that from to-day to 14th of February is precisely eight weeks? I wish I could annihi-

late seven of them and six days, that we might at once drift away to summer seas. Till to-morrow then, dearest, I am ever and for ever

Your devoted,

LETTER XLVIII

December.

DEAREST,—No, I do not know the lines you quote. Nor do I in the least degree comprehend what is meant by "roaring gray." In fact I associate the colour with things quiet, modest and retiring. There are incongruous mixtures of colour which shout loudly and discordantly, and there are violent pinks and purples and rasping plaids, and agonizing stripes, but to me gray suggests quiet and peace-loving scenes and things. Have not the Society of Friends adopted it as an emblem of their anti-belligerent proclivities? No doubt poetic roaring means something quite other than what I mean, for I am almost as great a savage in the matter of poetry as on the subject of

painting and music. I not only venture to like Byron, but to love Tom Moore, and even to delight in dear old jingling Tom Hood. This I have the courage to confess out loud. But there are deeper depths which I conceal from the public eye and ear, and only whisper to trusted friends. To you, trusted friend, I will confess that I do not understand Browning at all, and that Wagner bores when he does not irritate me. There, my conscience feels easier. You will not be able hereafter to accuse me of having concealed so great a blemish. Yes, the year has been eventful to us both, and how long these last three months have been! How we puff and strain and try to quicken our pace as we climb up to middle age. How far apart the milestones seem which mark the years. Then we turn the summit, and those who have done the downward journey will tell you that as you run down, as if acquiring velocity, you go faster and faster, till the yearstones come,

first in months, then weeks, and at last they seem only days apart, and now to you and to me what an Eternity seems between us and middle age. Yet have we both done half the journey. The rest we will do hand in hand, and the climb up will be easier to us both.

Lovingly your devoted,

ANSWER TO LETTER XLVIII

My Dearest,—Your name is the sweetest in the world. No one miscalled you, I only meant to ask why you seemed so generally known by another. Is the name by which I call you to be for me only?

I quite agree with you that there is much in a name. Do you remember the Irishman I introduced to you in a letter from Scotland? Well, he had a fortune left him by a rich relation, a brewer, on condition of his dropping entirely his own name Molloy and adopting that of Dugety. No persuasion would induce him to consider such "an insult to his ancestors." He told us of this upon our first evening at Spawn, and also that the limit of time given for

his acceptance would expire in a month and that he had finally decided to abandon the fortune. Miss Burk suggested an alternative. "Separate the syllable," she said, "and put the *e* under an accent, and you have the euphonious and aristocratic sound of 'Du Gety.' Of course the Du Getys came over with William. We have not by any means got to the end of the Conqueror's staff, only equalled in numbers by those who came over to America in the biggest ship that ever sailed the seas, 'The Mayflower.'"

"But," asked Molloy, "how do we account for being in Ireland?"

"Oh! that's easily managed," and Miss Burk on the instant arranged a family history. "A Du Gety was sent over to Ireland by the Conqueror to investigate the resources of the Island, and to see if there was anything worth the trouble of an invasion. This Viscount Du Gety found that one of the chief resources of the country

was whisky, and being a temperance man himself, he was appalled at the unquenchable thirst of the Celts for their national beverage. Being also a philanthropist he determined to devote his best energies to the suppression of the evil, so he married the heiress of a Distiller, and turned the wicked works into an innocent Brewery. Molloy's whisky was supplanted in the affections of the people by Du Gety's beer, and the family and the beer reached great eminence, especially the beer, which had a head on its pewter shoulders. Your branch of the family, you see, retained their ancient name, and their ancient faith in whisky; and this fortune now coming to you as next of kin, is from the Du Gety branch."

We were all immensely amused. My Uncle Mac in particular, but we never dreamed that Molloy would take the matter seriously and adopt the name, which he has done, for I have had from him quite

recently a most amusing letter signed "F. M. du Gety." I sent the letter on to the foundress of the family.

My mother is still in the North, she will go abroad later for some time: she has written that I am by no means to change my plans, as she will go over with some friends who will see after her.

The horses are at the door and we are off to P——y to see about the settlement of things of "outside importance." I shall see you to-morrow, dearest, till then *au revoir.*

Yours ever devotedly,

ANSWER TO LETTER XLIX

December.

My Dearest,—I am always blundering. I did not mean what you seem to have understood as a "pledge of independence to myself"; I really meant to say, and for you to understand, that a promise had been given of no further interference in plans and arrangements for which I alone am responsible. Now, dearest, let us respect the truce: pray, never understand me to say aught that could "wound or offend" a woman's "tenderness," and that woman, my mother.

Yes, I went to P——y, and so far as I could control events of "outside importance," everything is in a fair way of being settled. I will explain matters so far

as I can to-morrow. I did begrudge the hours yesterday at P——y that kept me out of the deliciously cold fine weather. I could not but think as I rode over the —— hills, that there are few countries in the world where one can spend a whole year so enjoyably as in our much abused England. A uniformly temperate, unexcitable climate. No fierce summer heat, no intense cold, the land overspread the whole year round by a mantle of green, and the waters, are they not tempered by the Gulf Stream? The even tenor of our way may be monotonous, but it is the safest to live with. *À propos* of the Gulf Stream, Miss Burk threatens that if we do not mind our p's and q's the Americans will turn the current away from us, and leave us out in the cold; and that the plan has been seriously proposed to the U. S. Government.

Everything out of doors looks so prosperous with us that our agricultural failure puzzles Americans. Mr. B. is of

opinion that judiciously treated and encouraged, our soil would feed our entire population, Army, Navy and all, with the most wholesome food. It certainly is surprising to see farms lying idle near the biggest City and the greatest market in the world, whilst farm produce is bought from our neighbours at enormous expenditure. There is no doubt some good and substantial reason for this state of things. You and I must make it one of the chief studies in our political education. Dearest, we shall have to curtail our drifting, if I accept this invitation to begin a political career on B.'s retirement. I saw the old gentleman yesterday, he is one of the old school, a brave soldier in the political ranks, ready to follow his (infallible) leader, and to fight for his propaganda. He was, I could see, impatient with my reason for delay. All I had to do for the first six or seven years, he said, was to hold my tongue and vote square. That probably neither I nor any one

else would regret it, if I allowed this rule to prevail for a longer period. I said, I thought I could pass years of silent meditation and contemplation in pleasanter surroundings than in a Legislative Chamber. "No, you can't," he said, "it's the very best Club in London."

Dearest, good-night. My love to Bengy. He always makes me welcome, which is more than I can say for some others at Blankley. Though I must confess M. A.'s attitude is rather sad submission to the inevitable, than disapproval. In fact, her manner puzzles me not a little, she looks at me with sorrowful, and sometime I am sure with tearful eyes ; and on Sunday when you were telling me your dream of sailing on summer seas, I caught an expression of terror in her really fine eyes, as if she saw the sword of Damocles hanging over my head. I wonder if she thinks me heir to consumption, which carried off poor Arthur, and from which I fear my dear father was

not quite free, though his last ailment had no relationship, I believe, to that insidious malady. Do find out, dearest, if this is what causes her anxiety, and then assure her that there is not a stronger pair of lungs in England. If it were not so I would have told you.

Ever your devoted,

ANSWER TO LETTERS L, LI, AND LII

January.

DEAREST,—Three letters of last year unanswered. Let me record here and explain, lest my biographer seek for and puzzle over an excuse for neglect on my part of my "young fiancée's beautiful epistles," that I have answered them in person, and that this is the first day of a New Year.

Letter Fifty. Rich woman! Fancy your bottling this up all the time, and keeping me in ignorance of the fact that I am to marry a woman of "proputty." A favour? You shall have your larks, dearest, I promise.

I have written M. A., and thanked her for the concession. The new experience of

finding you waiting for me and alone, has been entirely appreciated, and though you have been unusually silent, dearest, and are strangely timid without your chaperon, the minutes we are permitted to spend together are very precious. I shall probably see you as soon as you will have seen these lines. And here is another note waiting to be spoken to: Letter Fifty-two, with that quite pathetic letter about Arthur's friend. Dearest, thank you for mending the coat. I hope the youngster appreciates the honour. He ought to keep the garment in a glass case (when he can spare it) in memory of the helping hand. I liked the young chap from the first. You must put him at once on your visiting list. We will have him and Arthur down at H——y for part of the first holidays after our return.

Ever, my dearest, your devoted,

ANSWER TO LETTER LIV

January.

DEAREST,—I only wish I could have been with you last night, we should have admired the newly clad world together, but from the window. What could have possessed you to go out into the "Garden of entombments" all unprepared as you must have been for such an expedition. It was bitterly cold last night. I sincerely hope you are none the worse for such imprudence. It is high time you are put under proper control. I started to ride to Blankley this morning. I rode Nancy, who put her feet down as gingerly as if she were walking a minuet. At the lower bridge in the park she stopped and pawed the snow, and being satisfied that there was a sub-

stantial foundation, she went across. Arriving at the D—— road, I dismounted to open the gate. I left Miss Nancy as I have often left her before for a minute, and when I turned around she was scampering away over the park, kicking up the snow from her heels, and behaving in a manner most unbecoming one of her age and reputation. I had two miles to walk back, and either the cold or the walk reminded my poor foot of its late accident, and I am limping again. Faithless Nancy was unsaddled and stalled when I got back. One of the grooms met me with the pony trap. He had tracked me by the footprints in the snow. I think he brought the trap in lieu of a shutter. I shall either drive over or ride over to-morrow.

Dearest, I had your two letters together. Had you forgotten that you had written last night? I think you had. Now confess, that quite absorbed by the "rummaging" you wrote and despatched the

little note, and this morning, having forgotten all about it, you sent the poor man all the way over in the slush. I sent him to the housekeeper, who gave him his dinner, and I hope something comforting in the way of beverage, and as some hampers were to be sent to the station, he had a lift that far in the cart. Now, dearest, I am going to make this a short letter, for Uncle Mac is coming home to-night, and I have much in the way of letter-writing before he arrives, after that I shall not be able to touch a pen. I have so much to hear and so much to tell. Let me hear the result of the last night's expedition, lest something prevent my going over to-morrow. Dearest, good-bye. I do hope you are not suffering the consequences of your prowl in the snow.

Ever, dearest, devotedly, your

ANSWER TO LETTER LV

January 28th.

DEAREST,—I do not the very least understand your last letter. To what announcement do you refer? So far as I know, nothing in our arrangements has been changed. I wish I could say, "Well," dearest, but is it well? I shall be with you latish to-day. Uncle Mac has arrived, and we are going over to P——y on business. Have you heard from my mother? So only can I account for the passage in your letter which refers to "the move coming from her."

Au revoir, dearest,

Your ever loving,

ANSWER TO LETTER LVI

London,
February 2nd.

Dearest,—I fear you did not receive a line which I sent you from P——y to account for my absence. I had your last this morning, and I shall return to-morrow and ride over directly. I hope to be with you about three.

Until then, my dear dear, *au revoir.*

Lovingly your devoted,

LETTER IN REPLY TO ONE FROM MRS. N. (M. A.)

February 14*th.*

I HAD your letter last night. I do not know which of us is most to be pitied; as for blame you cannot take any part of that upon yourself. I can see how truly terrible has been your position, with this hideous doubt in your mind, and yet only a doubt, with no one to share it, the fear of speaking one word which would awaken suspicion, perhaps unfounded, in the mind of others, and cause "misery unspeakable." I am so utterly dazed by my late experience that I can at this moment only answer your questions; this I will do as far as possible, and I beg you will not again apologise for writing to me, or hesitate to do so; my

time, my whole attention, and everything I possess the power to control is entirely at your disposal, and I remain here at your service, and of that of my poor darling's so long as you desire it. You ask me if I had no suspicions.

At first I had none, perhaps I never should have had, but for a rumour which reached me. Then I thought the "eccentricity" of which my darling was accused simply the beauty of a character far beyond the comprehension of those who attempted to discuss it. As time went on I had moments of uneasiness. For one thing I quite failed to interest her in my pursuits, past or in prospect. Her letters, though most beautiful, might, but for her expressions of love and devotion to me, have been written for publication, and with one or two exceptions, she never answered a question, even the all-important one of the date for our marriage. The uneasiness of mind that all this caused me would vanish when

we met. Then her affection, her childlike trust and seeming dependence upon my love alone for happiness, her brilliant imagination and power of expression, and her originality, banished from my thoughts all suspicion, all doubt. I was only conscious of profound admiration.

Latterly she has dwelt much upon my mother's opposition, and she has imagined circumstances in connection with it which had no ground for foundation. I was under the impression that some mischievous person was at work, filling her mind with stories of my mother's objections, and the reasons which prompted them. I could not tell her, poor darling, the real cause of the opposition of my family to the marriage. In fact, I have never mentioned it to her except just after my mother's visit to Blankley. Then my darling introduced the subject. She wrote me that she believed my mother thought her mad, and in reply I said that a mischievous rumour

had reached my mother concerning hers, Mrs. ——, and her voluntary isolation and separation from her husband.

Now, I will tell you, as you wish it, what took place at our last interview, the horror of which is still upon me. Riding over from my uncle's on the D—— road, I saw her, on that little eminence which she has named the Bridge of Sighs. I signalled to her as usual, but she took no notice. I rode up. She stood with her hat in her hand, the wind lifting her beautiful hair and blowing it about. She had on no wrap, her throat was bare, as were her hands. Her face was flushed, and her eyes fairly blazed. I was frozen with terror. I could scarcely get off my horse, my limbs trembled, and I heard my teeth chattering.

"I am waiting for my love," she said: "Have you seen him? You must have passed him on the way. Do you know him? He is the most beautiful of men, he

is called ——, but that is not the name by which love baptised him, and to which I was sponsor. But nobody may use that name but me."

I saw that all was over for me and for her in this world. I humoured her by a made-up story, that her love had taken another road. I got her home. We went in by the little side door, no one saw us enter. I led the way, she followed to the library, and then she looked around.

"You have deceived me," she said. "He, my love, is not here. You have come from him with a message to me, or he is dead. Is he dead, my love, my heart, my soul, is he dead?"

She came near me as she spoke, and the old mischievous look came for an instant to her face. It came to my mind that she was acting. I sprang forward and clasped her in my arms, and then she shrieked wildly, and you all came in and

she denounced me and called upon her love to kill the false friend.

I rushed away. Roberts had caught my horse, which I had led, or which had followed us to the garden gate. I rode madly over to my uncle's, ordered my man to accompany me to town, and went at once to our old friend and family doctor, and accompanied him to the very best living authority on mental diseases. He listened, and then he pronounced sentence of separation. Then I fell ill, and I am now only so far recovered as to sit up in my bed and send you these lines on this that was to have been our wedding-day. I thank you for the letter which the poor darling has numbered Sixty-five. It is difficult to believe that this letter is addressed to an imaginary man, whilst the real man is unrecognised. I have read with amazement the passage you point out: "Two women have inhabited me." These were the very

words of Dr. ——, "It is a dual existence," he said: "there is one here similarly affected. A highly intellectual and a beautiful woman. It is a pleasure to listen to her conversation. No one could believe her mad, till she tells you confidentially that she is the Empress of Russia." In this experience of the Doctor's this species of madness is incurable, and his advice is that she be never left alone.

I asked the Doctor if it would be well to keep up my poor darling's interest by continuing to write to her, though she did not recognise me, she would my letters. He thinks it not only unwise, but dangerous, as she would no doubt try to reach whatever place I might be in at great risk and danger to herself. I can write no more, I beg you to keep me advised of her condition. I place myself entirely in your hands. I am incapable of acting independently. Give my darling, my poor

afflicted one, my love, if you think it safe to do so. Be guided entirely by her interests, never consult mine, and you will add to the kindness and goodness which you have ever shown me.

Ever, dear Mrs. N.,

Sincerely yours,

EPILOGUE

Written after the parting on the receipt by him of the Letters LXII., LXIII., and LXV. from her.

"Oh, if I could see once into the brain of it all."

So writes the poor heart living on when the brain is dead. Ah! the pity of it, the torturing, the agonising pity of it all. Sweetheart, if a time should ever come when your mind's eye can again view the circumstances of life as they exist, when you realise that you loved an idea which for a time you embodied in a living man, then, dearest (and dearest you must ever be to me), you will see these words, and you will know that it was not I that failed you, but circumstances born of fate. You will see that I *have* kept your beautiful letters;

they will never leave me so long as life lasts; and yes, yes, dear heart, "Beyond there, one sees everything." We are young, dearest, to be parted like this just at the very outset of our journey, before we were able to do a hill together. Dark clouds hang over the way before me now; I see no gleam of happiness, but I know the sun still shines on the other side. I shall climb wearily up to middle age, and then comes the descent, and the yearstones will come none too closely together then, for, sweetheart, you will be there waiting for me at the end, and we will begin a new life together.

One might believe in evolution and the accident of our creation, that the mystery of thought was the result of muscular action, and that all stops when that action ceases; but what of the affections? Where the necessity of giving us this divine light on a road that leads to nothing? I could not accept that doctrine if I would.

Dearest, if ever you read these lines, do not sink under sorrow for the *might have been*, do not let pity for me wound your tender heart; I am, and ever shall be, grateful for the blessedness of having loved, though you, my beloved, are lost to me here. Sweetheart, farewell, farewell.

Your ever devoted,

THE END

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